



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Office of the Under Secretary for
Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

May 24, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR:

NOAA Executive Council
NOAA Executive Panel

FROM:

Tim McClung 
Chief, Decision Coordination Office

SUBJECT:

DCO Policy on Virtual NEC/NEP Reviews

NOAA's Decision Coordination Office (DCO) uses a "Virtual" format for expedited review of decisional and informational, programmatic/administrative issues. The use of "Virtuals" reduces the number of briefings scheduled for NEP and/or NEC meetings.

In response to feedback received at a recent NEP briefing, the following policy regarding the handling of Virtuals will be effective immediately.

Proposed briefings, deemed appropriate (by the Point of Contact (POC)) for the Virtual format, should be submitted to DCO for review. Pending any necessary coordination with other NEP/NEC members and/or Senior NOAA Leadership, DCO staff will confirm the submission content is appropriate for the Virtual format. Appropriate Virtual materials will be issued by DCO with *two to five business days* allowed for review by NEP/NEC members. In coordination with the POC, the length of time allowed for review will be based on the priority of the material submitted, as well as the number of other recent/imminent Virtuals (and their respective priority level(s)). Final determination of the length of review allowed rests with DCO staff, however, every effort will be made to allow as much time as possible for the review of all Virtuals.

If during any Virtual review process any NEP/NEC member sufficiently justifies to DCO a need to bring the Virtual content/material before the NEP/NEC for needed discussion and/or decision(s), the Virtual will be suspended. DCO will notify NEP/NEC members of the suspended review as soon as possible.

If possible, NOAA employees submitting Virtuals are encouraged to notify DCO staff in advance to "schedule" their Virtuals. This advance coordination effort may potentially reduce "clustering" of Virtual reviews. In addition, forthcoming Virtuals could be briefly highlighted at NEP/NEC meetings, providing a format for members to voice objections in advance regarding any content they deem inappropriate for the DCO Virtual process.

